

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NEAE-00 EUR-10 EB-03 IO-03 PRS-01

L-02 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 NSC-07 NSCE-00

FAA-00 DOTE-00 COA-01 CG-00 DRC-01 DLOS-03 PM-03 SP-01

COME-00 /067 W

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P 111320Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3059

INFO SECDEF

AMEMBASSY ANKARA

USMISSION NATO

USCINCEUR

CINCUSAFE

USDOCOSOUTH

CINCUSNAVEUR

AMCON THESSALONIKI

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 ATHENS 2223

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR TU GR US

SUBJ: GREEK VERSION OF MARCH 28 INCIDENT IN
NORTHERN AEGEAN

REF: A. ATHENS 1969 B. ANKARA 2684 C. ATHENS 2199

EUCOM, USAF, NAVEUR AND AFSOUTH FOR POLADS

SUMMARY: GREEK FONOFF REPORTS THAT MARCH 28 SITUATION
RESULTED FROM TURKISH INSISTENCE ON FLYING TASMO MISSIONS
IN AEGEAN, DESPITE AIR SAFETY PROBLEMS POINTED OUT BY GREEK
AVIATION AUTHORITIES, AND RESULTANT FORESHORTENING OF NATO
EXERCISE. TAF ALLEGED TO HAVE VIOLATED ICAO AND NATO

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PROCEDURES IN PROVOCATIVE MANNER, BUT GREEK SELF-RESTRAINT

CLAIMED BOTH DURING COURSE OF INCIDENT AND IN AFTERMATH. ONGOING GREEK-TURKISH DISPUTE OVER RIGHTS TO AEGEAN CONTINENTAL SHELF CLEARLY UNDERLAY MARCH 28 INCIDENT. END SUMMARY.

1. FOLLOWING APPEARANCE OF STORIES IN GREEK, TURKISH AND THIRD COUNTRY PRESS ABOUT DISRUPTION OF NATO NAVAL EXERCISE AND ALLEGED CONFRONTATION BETWEEN GREEK AND TURKISH FORCES IN COURSE OF TURKISH AIR FORCE FLIGHT ACTIVITIES IN NORTHERN AEGEAN MARCH 28. POL COUNSELOR AND POLMIL OFFICER CALLED ON GREGORIADES, DIRECTOR THIRD DIRECTORATE (NATO AFFAIRS), APRIL 10 IN ORDER TO ASCERTAIN FACTS OF SITUATION AND ELICIT INFORMATION THAT MIGHT ILLUMINATE GOG ATTITUDES. GREGORIADES, ON WHOM EMBASSY HAD BEEN INVITED TO CALL FOR THIS PURPOSE, DREW UPON LENGTHY DOCUMENT IN ENGLISH WHICH FROM GREGORIADES' COMMENTS EMBOFFS TOOK TO BE EITHER GOG COMMUNICATION TO CINCSOUTH OR A CINCSOUTH DOCUMENT DESCRIBING SITUATION.

2. EMBOFFS EXPLAINED THAT THEY SEEKING INFORMATION BECAUSE OF CONTINUING INFLAMMATORY PRESS STORIES WHICH DESCRIBED MARCH 28 INCIDENT IN TERMS WHICH, IF TRUE, WOULD BE MATTER OF CONSIDERABLE CONCERN TO ALLIES OF GREECE AND TURKEY. GREGORIADES IMMEDIATELY DISCLAIMED ANY RESPONSIBILITY FOR LEAKS TO PRESS, SAYING THAT IT NOT IN GOG'S INTERESTS TO EXCITE PUBLIC OPINION--EVEN WITH RECITAL OF ACCURATE FACTS OF SITUATION. HE NOTED THAT THESE STORIES USUALLY HAD GERMS OF TRUTH BUT SO TWISTED AS TO DISTORT SITUATION. ELLINIKOS VORRAS OF THESSALONIKI AND HURRIYET OF ISTANBUL WERE IDENTIFIED AS PRINCIPAL CULPRITS, BUT STORIES IN BRITISH PRESS ALSO NOTED AS INACCURATE. IN LATTER REGARD, GREGORIADES ATTRIBUTED TO UNSPECIFIED FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS BIAS IN FAVOR OF GREEK OPPOSITION WHICH, HE FELT, MIGHT HAVE LED THEM TO PRODUCE SLANTED STORIES.

3. GREGORIADES STATED THAT LATE MARCH NAVAL EXERCISE INVOLVED UNITS OF GREEK, TURKISH, U.S., U.K. AND ITALIAN NAVIES. HE DETAILED STEPS OF PLANNING LEADING UP TO EXERCISE, PARTICULARLY THOSE BY TURKEY INVOLVING PROJECTED TURKISH AIR FORCE (TAF) TACTICAL AIR SUPPORT OF

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MARITIME OPERATIONS (TASMO) MISSIONS. HE INDICATED THAT TAF ON FEBRUARY 18 REQUESTED NOTICE TO AIRMEN (NOTAM) BE ISSUED BY GREEK AVIATION AUTHORITIES FOR THREE AREAS WITHIN ATHENS FLIGHT INFORMATION REGION (FIR) FOR MARCH 28: (A) BETWEEN LIMNOS AND LESBOS, IN VICINITY OF AGIOS EFSTRATIOS, (B) EAST OF RHODES, AND (C) WEST OF LESBOS.

COMMENT: DATT INFORMED BY HAFIC CONTACTS THAT, AS IN

SEVERAL PAST YEARS, NAVSOUTH EARLIER HAD SUGGESTED TO
TURKISH GENERAL STAFF (TGS) THAT TAF CONSIDER FLYING TASMO
MISSIONS IN CONNECTION WITH LATE MARCH NATO EXERCISE.
APPARENTLY MIFFED THAT NAVSOUTH HAD NOT CONSULTED WITH
SHAFC FIRST, GREEK AUTHORITIES REPORTEDLY DID NOT RESPOND
TO FEBRUARY 18 TURKISH REQUEST. UPON FAILING TO HEAR FROM
GREEK AUTHORITIES, TAF REPORTEDLY INFORMED GREEKS (PRE-
SUMABLY ON OR IMMEDIATELY BEFORE MARCH 21) OF TAF INTENTION
TO FLY TASMO MISSIONS ON MARCH 28 IN AREAS PREVIOUSLY IN-
DICATED WHEREUPON GREEKS INFORMED TAF THAT FOR AIR SAFETY
REASONS AREAS NEAR AGIOS EFSTRATIOS AND WEST OF LESBOS
WOULD BE INAPPROPRIATE AND ISSUED NOTAM FOR AREA EAST OF
RHODES.

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ACTION NEA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NEAE-00 DLOS-03 EUR-10 EB-03 IO-03

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INFO SECDEF

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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 ATHENS 2223

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4. ON MARCH 23 TURKISH AUTHORITIES ISSUED NOTAM FOR AREA WEST OF LESBOS, WHICH, AS NOTED, IS WITHIN ATHENS FIR. GOG PROTESTED TO GOT ON SAME DATE ABOUT THIS VIOLATION OF ICAO PROCEDURES. ON MARCH 26 TGS ADVISED SHAFc THAT MARCH 28 TASMO MISSIONS WOULD BE CARRIED OUT AS NATIONAL EXERCISE. CINCSOUTH REPORTEDLY NOTIFIED PARTICIPANTS IN NATO EXERCISE ON MARCH 26-27 THAT CONTRARY TO EARLIER PLANNING MARCH 28 PHASE WOULD BE NATIONAL PHASE, SINCE TAF WOULD BE FLYING NATIONAL TRAINING MISSIONS. ON MARCH 27 TURKS INFORMED ALLIES THAT NATIONAL EXERCISE ON MARCH 28 WOULD PROCEED AS PLANNED . ON EVENING OF MARCH 27 OTHER PARTICIPANTS WITHDREW UPON TERMINATION OF MULTILATERAL, SECRET

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NATO PHASE OF EXERCISE.

5. DATT INFORMED BY HAFc THAT ON MARCH 28 TAF FLEW TWELVE SORTIES IN EXERCISE AREA, OF WHICH THREE PENETRATED GREEK AIR SPACE OVER LESBOS OR ITS SURROUNDING TERRITORIAL WATERS. GREGORIADES, IN ADDITION TO AIR SPACE PENETRATIONS, LISTED OTHER TURKISH VIOLATIONS OF NATO OR ICAO PROCEDURES; (A) ALTHOUGH TURKISH-ISSUED NOTAM WARNED OF TACTICAL FLIGHTS ONLY UP TO ALTITUDE OF 10,000 FEET, TURKISH AIRCRAFT FLEW UP TO 29,000 FEET; (B) NO ICAO FLIGHT PLANS WERE FILED WITH ATHENS FIR FOR ANY OF MISSIONS; (C) TAF AIRCRAFT OPERATED WITHOUT IFF APPARATUS OPERATING, THEREBY PREVENTING POSITIVE IDENTIFICATION OF AIRCRAFT BY GREEK AIR DEFENSE REGION; (D) WHEN HAF QUERIED TAF OVER TURKISH AIR DEFENSE NET RE IDENTITY OF AIRCRAFT, TURKS DENIED KNOWLEDGE OF TURKISH AIRCRAFT IN EXERCISE AREA. THIS RESPONSE OBVIOUSLY FALSE SINCE RADAR TRACKINGS SHOWED AIRCRAFT RETURNING TO TURKEY. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION, GREGORIADES CONFIRMED THAT HAF AIRCRAFT HAD THEN BEEN DIRECTED TO EXERCISE AREA TO MAKE POSITIVE VISUAL IDENTIFICATION OF AIRCRAFT AS TAF. IN THIS CONNECTION, GREGORIADES DENIED ANY CONNECTION BETWEEN THIS INTERCEPT AND MARCH 28 CRASH OF HAF F84F ON ISLAND OF EVIA, WHICH PRESS HAD LINKED TO INTERCEPT.

6. REFERRING TO PRESS CHARACTERIZATION OF GREEK WITHDRAWAL FROM EXERCISE AS PROTEST AGAINST TURKISH ACTION, GREGORIADES STATED THAT "SUSPENSE OF PARTICIPATION OF GREEK UNITS WAS BECAUSE COMEDNOREAST DID NOT ADHERE TO GUIDANCE OF CINCSOUTH. TURKS CHANGED CHARACTER OF EXERCISE."

7. COMMENT: ABOVE ACCOUNT OBVIOUSLY GREEK VERSION OF COMPLEX CHAIN OF EVENTS IN WHICH CURRENT, AND WELL-PUBLICIZED, DISPUTE OVER RIGHTS TO AEGEAN CONTINENTAL

SHELF, HISTORICAL GREEK-TURKISH ANIMOSITY, AND NATIONAL PRIDE OF GREEK AND TURK ALL PLAYED PART. IT WOULD APPEAR THAT INITIAL GREEK FAILURE TO RESPOND TO ROUTINE TURKISH REQUEST FOR NOTAM ISSUANCE WAS INTERPRETED PERHAPS CORRECTLY, BY TURKS AS A CALCULATED ATTEMPT TO STRENGTHEN GOG CLAIM TO EXCLUSIVE CONTROL OF AEGEAN. APPARENTLY
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PROVOCATIVE MANNER IN WHICH TAF ARRANGED AND CONDUCTED ITS TRAINING MISSIONS APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN TURKISH RIPOSTE.

8. FOR USDOCOSOUTH, EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE CONFIRMATION OR CORRECTION OF ABOVE ACCOUNT, AS WELL AS INDICATION OF AEGEAN AREAS FOR WHICH NOTAMS ISSUED FOR TAF EXERCISES IN LAST YEAR OR TWO. BRANDIN

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